

PAPERS READ.

NOTES ON THE NIDIFICATION OF CERTAIN
AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

BY A. J. NORTH, F.L.S.

1. PLATYCERCUS BARNARDI, Vigors and Horsfield.

This beautiful Parrakeet is distributed over the southern portions of the interior of Australia, and is found frequenting alike the neighbourhood of the Lachlan and Darling Rivers in New South Wales, as well as the dense Mallee districts of Victoria and South Australia. In the cultivated portions of the country the birds assemble together in small flocks, and commit great depredations on the crops, consequently a merciless warfare is waged against them by the farmers. For a set of the eggs of this species I am indebted to Mr. Joseph A. Hill, of "Pine Rise," Kewell, Victoria, who obtained them, after carefully watching a pair of birds for some time in the vicinity, on September 15th, 1887. They were deposited on the decaying wood, about two feet down the hollow limb of a *Eucalyptus*, at a height of thirty feet from the ground. The eggs are five in number for a sitting, pure white, oval in form, and nearly equal in size at both ends, measuring as follows:—

Length (A) 1·11 × 0·9 inch ; (B) 1·2 × 0·92 inch ; (C) 1·16 × 0·91 inch ; (D) 1·17 × 0·9 inch ; (E) 1·18 × 0·92 inch.

2. PSEPHOTUS HÆMATOGASTER, Gould.

P. hæmatorrhous, Bonap.

The habitat of this species is the interior portions of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, but its range extends also to Tasmania.

For a full set of the eggs of this bird I am likewise indebted to Mr. Joseph Hill, who obtained them at Kewell, Victoria, from the hollow branch of a *Eucalyptus*, on September 15th, 1887. They are seven in number for a sitting, and when found were in a very advanced state of incubation. In form they are rounded ovals, a single specimen only (F) being somewhat sharply pointed at one end, pure white, and the shell very smooth but without any gloss. They measure as follows:—Length (A) 0.94×0.8 inch; (B) 0.95×0.8 inch; (C) 0.94×0.78 inch; (D) 0.97×0.76 inch; (E) 0.95×0.8 inch; (F) 0.97×0.78 inch; (G) 0.97×0.8 inch.

3. TRICHOGLOSSUS CHLOROLEPIDOTUS, Kuhl.

The Scaly-breasted Lorikeet is plentifully dispersed over the greater part of Queensland and the northern portion of New South Wales, but is seldom found further south than the Murray River, the natural boundary of the latter colony.

Mr. George Barnard of Coomooboolaroo, who has contributed largely towards a knowledge of the nidification of many of the birds of Central Queensland, informs me that he found this species breeding in the hollow spouts of the lofty Eucalypts in the neighbourhood of the Dawson River, and that all the nests, seven in number, taken by his sons, unlike those of any other member of the *Psittacidae* family, each contained but a single egg, several of them being in a very advanced state of incubation. Two eggs taken during the month of November are pure white, in form oval slightly tapering at one end, the texture of the shell being fine and smooth, but without any lustre. Length (A) 0.95×0.79 inch; (B) 0.97×0.8 inch.

XENORHYNCHUS AUSTRALIS, Latham.

The Jabiru of the Australian Continent, at one time thought to be specifically distinct from that of India but now recognised to be one and the same species, is widely dispersed over the northern portions of Australia. It is found frequenting the estuaries of rivers as well as the inland marshes and lagoons, from the Clarence River on the east coast to Cambridge Gulf on the north-west, specimens having been procured at the latter place by the late Mr. T. H. Boyer-Bower, and it will undoubtedly be found much farther south when our knowledge of the range of the Western Australian avi-fauna is fully worked out. The great stronghold, however, of this species is the Indian Empire over the principal portion of which it has been found breeding, and accounts of which have been given by various writers. Allan Hume in his valuable work on the "Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds" deals exhaustively with the subject; but it is only within the last few years that it has been found breeding on the Australian Continent.

The nest is a huge flat structure composed of sticks, lined with twigs and grasses, and is usually placed in the high boughs of a lofty tree in the near vicinity of water. Mr. Geo. Barnard found a nest near Rockhampton, Queensland, but the Jabirus did not remain long in undisputed possession of it, owing to the repeated attacks of a pair of Wedge-tailed eagles, (*Aquila audax*) which ultimately caused them to desert it.

I am indebted to Mr. John Leadbeater of the National Museum, Melbourne, for the opportunity of describing these rare Australian eggs, which, he informs me, were taken about four months ago in the Clarence River district, New South Wales. They are oval in form, being nearly equal in size at both ends, of a dull yellowish-white or whity-brown colour, the surface of the shell being smooth but minutely pitted all over similar to those of the yellow-

legged Spoonbill (*Platibis flavipes*), and measure as follows:—Length (A) 2.93×2.1 inches; (B) 2.92×2.12 inches. These eggs in shape, colour, and size, agree with those described by Mr. A. Hume* (see *Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds by Allan Hume*, p. 608), the average of forty-five eggs measured by him being 2.91×2.12 inches. So also do those of the Australian specimens obtained in the neighbourhood of Ingham at the mouth of the Herbert River, Queensland, in March, 1885, and described in a joint paper contributed to the Royal Society of Queensland by Messrs. W. T. White and Henry Tryon on the 6th of August, 1886 (See *Proc. Royal Soc. Queensland*, p: 139).

* Dr. Ramsay informs me that a pair of these birds were found breeding on the border of Lake Macquarie in 1860. During the last few years young birds have been occasionally forwarded to the Australian Museum and Botanic Gardens, Sydney, showing that the birds breed freely in New South Wales.